



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Southern District of Georgia*

*Post Office Box 8970
Savannah, GA 31412
(912) 652-4422 / FAX (912) 652-4805*

*100 Bull Street
Savannah, GA 31401*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, March 23, 2006
(Corrected Release)**

**CONTACT: Edmund A. Booth, Jr.
First Assistant U.S. Attorney
(706) 724-0517**

INDICTMENTS RETURNED ON 7 MEMBERS OF SAVANNAH AREA FIREARM AND DRUG ORGANIZATION

Lisa Godbey Wood, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia, announced today that a federal grand jury has returned indictments against seven alleged members of a group known as the "Hodges Organization," for multiple firearms and drug violations. These men join four other members of the group who were previously indicted for drug violations and the illegal possession and sale of firearms.

Vanessa McLemore, Special Agent in Charge of the Atlanta Field Division, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) joined in the announcement. The underlying investigation was initiated in November 2004 by ATF and members of the Savannah-Chatham Counter Narcotics Team. During the course of the investigation, approximately 60 firearms were purchased and/or seized from the defendants by undercover ATF agents, including machineguns, sawed-off shotguns, rifles and pistols.

According to the indictments, members of the Hodges Organization are alleged to have been involved in the illegal possession and sale of firearms and illegally trafficking large quantities of narcotics in the Atlanta and Savannah areas.

The following defendants were arrested on March 21, 2006:

- James Brandon Hodges, 25, of Bloomingdale, Ga., charged with methamphetamine distribution and transferring a firearm to a convicted felon;
- James Frederick Hodges, 47, of Bloomingdale, Ga, charged with unlawful distribution of Oxycontin;
- Steven Charles Dyches, 24, of Ellabelle, Ga., charged with methamphetamine distribution;
- Burnice Howard McClendon, 23, of Pembroke, Ga., charged with possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, dealing firearms without a license, possession of two unregistered short-barreled (sawed-off) shotguns and cocaine distribution;
- Harold L. Porterfield, 44, of Bloomingdale, Ga., charged with unlawful distribution of Oxycontin pills; and

Michael Joe Pevey, 34, of Guyton, Ga., charged with methamphetamine distribution and Jason Robert Hodges, 29, of Savannah, Ga., charged with possession of six unregistered short barreled (sawed-off) shotguns, transferring firearms to a convicted felon, dealing firearms without a license, and methamphetamine distribution, were already in custody on other charges.

The following four members of the Hodges Organization who were previously charged and arrested include:

- Donald Lee Ubele, 41, of Savannah, Ga., charged with possession of an unregistered machinegun and possession of over 30 firearms by a convicted felon.
- Anthony Ray Robbins, 30, of Savannah, Ga., charged with possession of a firearm as a convicted felon;
- Lora Moxley, 28, of Vidalia, Ga., charged with methamphetamine distribution; and
- Demetrick Cleveland Tigner, 28, of Garden City, Ga., charged with distribution of both powder and crack cocaine.

The Savannah-Chatham Metro Police Department and the U.S. Marshals Service joined the ATF and the Chatham County Counter Narcotics Team in this joint investigation. The lead

prosecutor representing the government is Assistant U.S. Attorney Darrin L. McCullough in Savannah.

An indictment is only an accusation, and it is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are entitled to a fair trial, during which it will be the government's burden to prove their guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

15-06